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NO. 30
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SPRING 82

SPECIAL 32 PAGE ISSUE

SERIAL WORLD

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RETURN OF THE COPPERHEAD

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1982 PROGRESS REPORT
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CAUGHT IN "THE SPIDER'S WEB"

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SERIAL WORLD

VOL. 4, NO. 30

A Quarterly publication dedicated to the motion picture serial

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BACK ISSUES — See pages 29-30

OUR THANKS THIS ISSUE TO: Bobb Lynes, Jim Stringham, Mario DeMarco, Ron Vivian, Chuck McCleary, Eric Hoffman, John Cardello, Tom Weaver. Special thanks to Jim Stringham and Eric Hoffman this issue.

CLASSIFIED CHAPTERS

SYNOPSIS! CHAPTER ONE — a 5½" x 8½" booklet contains pressbook synopses to BUCK ROGERS, SCOUTS TO THE RESCUE, PERILS OF NYOKA, MONSTER AND THE APE, THE SHADOW, SECRET OF TREASURE ISLAND, ROARING WEST, OVERLAND MAIL, THE LONE RANGER, DON WINSLOW OF THE NAVY, THE PHANTOM EMPIRE, OREGON TRAIL, RUSTLERS OF RED DOG, VALLEY OF VANISHING MEN, ADVENTURES OF RED RYDER, LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN, THE VIGILANTE. $5 postpaid. $7.50 overseas. Norm's Nostalgia Club, 1726 Maux, Houston, Texas 77043.

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SERIAL SHOWCASE

BY JEFF WALTON
EDITOR SERIAL WORLD

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

The best laid plans of mice and men...I had hoped to have the results of our SERIAL HEROES POLL that we ran last issue. No way Jose, I cannot tell you in this short space how great the response was. We received ballots, ballots and more ballots. I even have to get more help to tabulate the votes. And what a variety of names we got on the list. Even after the deadline votes for serial heroes poured in. I never dreamed you folks would get this involved. So while I know many of you may be unhappy about the results not being in this issue, they will for sure in the next. Deadline for voting has been extended and you can still vote for the top 10 serial stars of your choice. (See issue No. 29)

Looks like there will be a RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK II. While we cannot call **Raiders** an out and out serial, we can say it sure helped revive interest in serials as you can see by the article on page 25 of this issue.

Our thanks also to Mr. Blackie Seymour and Danny Amorello for being kind enough to share their project of RETURN OF THE COPPERHEAD with us.

Once again, if you have any news on serials in your area or anything printed in your papers why not clip it out and send it to us at our editorial address. We'll be glad to give you credit in print for any contribution. Also, keep your eyes open for any color material you may spot on the cliffhangers as we are constantly on the prowl to bring you rare material that was done in color on the chapterplays. Enjoy this issue and please keep those cards and letters coming...

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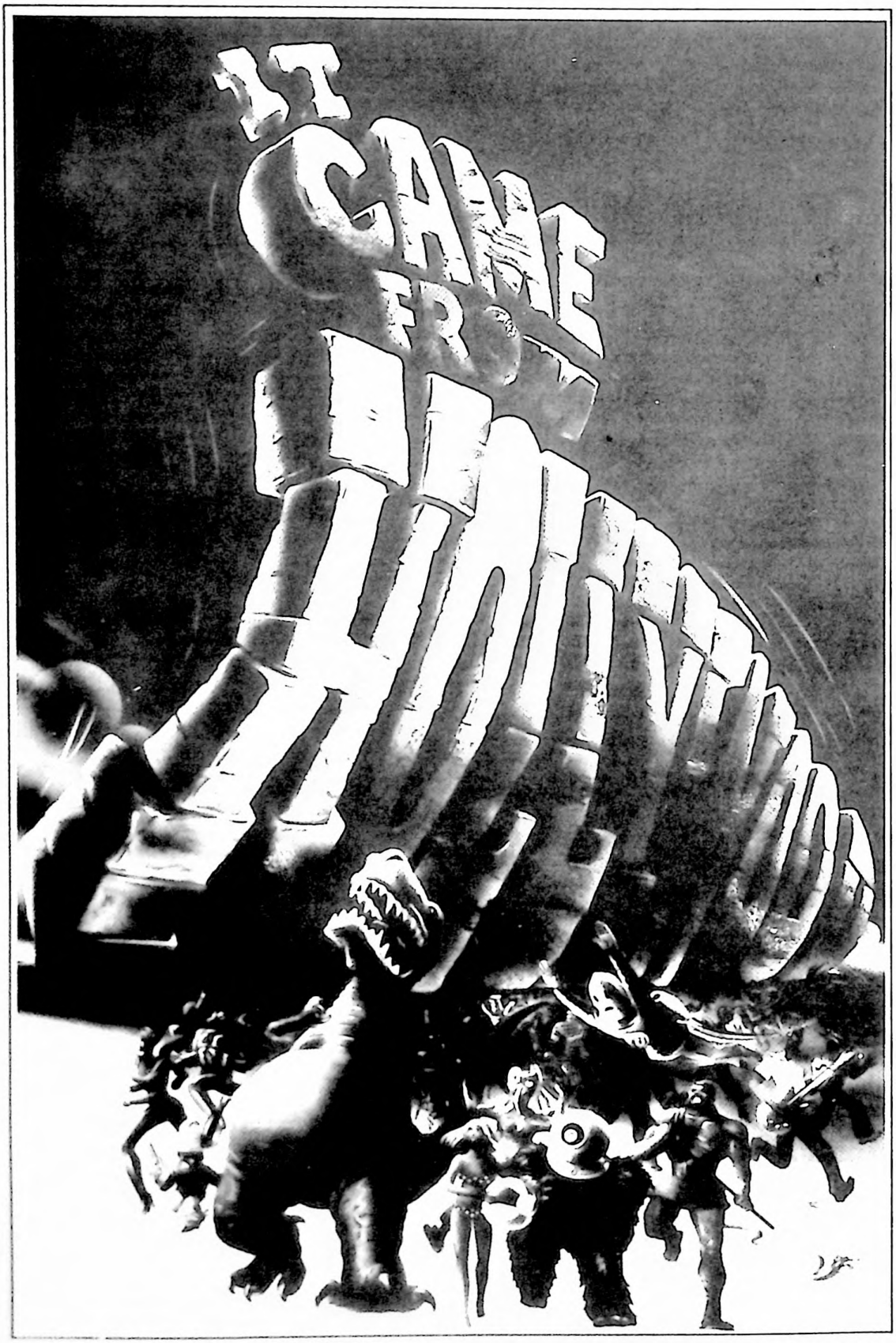

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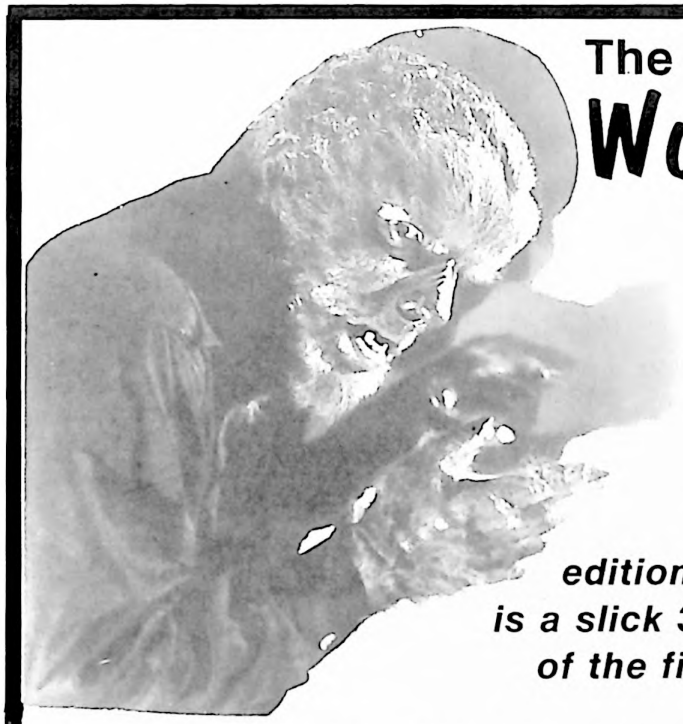

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'THE SPIDER'S WEB'

A COLUMBIA CHAPTER PLAY
Synopsis by Eric Hoffman

Directed by RAY TAYLOR & JAMES W. HORNE
Screenplay by ROBERT E. KENT, BASIL DICKEY, GEORGE H. PLYMPTON, MARTIE RAMSON
Based on the characters in the 'Spider' Magazine stories by Grant Stockbridge
Executive Producer: IRVING BRISKIN
Produced by JACK FIER
Music: MORRIS STOLOFF
Edited by RICHARD FANTL
Photography: ALLEN G. SIEGLER

CAST

WARREN HULL as RICHARD WENTWORTH/THE SPIDER/'BLINKY' McQUADE
IRIS MEREDITH as NITA VAN SLOAN
RICHARD FISKE as JACKSON
KENNETH DUNCAN as RAM SINGH
FORBES MURRAY as COMMISSIONER KIRK
DONALD DOUGLAS as COMM. KIRK
CHARLES WILSON as CHASE
MARC LAWRENCE as STEVE
EDWARD EARLE as ADAMS
BENTLEY HEWETT as CRANE
LESTOR DORR as MARTIN
GENE ANDERSON JR. as JIMMIE SANDS
ANN REVERE as MISS SANDS
DICK CURTIS as MALLOY
AL HERMAN as SPIKE MALEAN
GLORIA BLONDELL as CHASE'S SECRETARY
BYRON FOULGER as ROBERTS
LANE CHANDLER as TRIGGER
NESTOR PAIVA as RED
ERNIE ADAMS as the Beggar
ROBERT KORTMAN as Garage Heavy
EDMUND COBB as POLICE ANNOUNCER
LEE PRATHER as MORRIS
TOM STEELE & BUD GEARY as Heavies
PAUL WHITNEY as GREY

EPISODES

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2. DEATH BELOW
3. HIGH VOLTAGE
4. SURRENDER OR DIE
5. SHOOT TO KILL!
6. SEALED LIPS
7. SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT
8. WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS
9. DOOMED!
10. FLAMING DANGER
11. THE ROAD TO PERIL
12. THE SPIDER FALLS
13. THE MAN HUNT
14. THE DOUBLE CROSS
15. THE OCTOPUS UNMASKED

NO. 1: NIGHT OF TERROR

New York City is in a state of terror as a series of horrifying disasters occur that threaten to cripple the city's transportation system. Trains have collided, bridges destroyed, and, most recently, trucks from the Roberts trucking company have been wrecked. At the office of the company, Roberts himself receives a call from an unknown individual threatening him.

A short time later, in a huge conference room somewhere in the city, we find several men in black robes and hoods. Uneven footsteps are heard and a bizarre figure, dressed in an outfit similar to the others, except it is white, enters. One leg is shorter than the other and the newcomer uses a crutch to get to the desk at the front of the room. Upon that desk is a microphone into which the

mystery man, The Octopus, speaks, to disguise his real voice. As he seats himself at the table we note that his right hand is false! A most bizarre individual indeed.

Two of his men bring in Roberts, who has been kidnapped, and the Octopus reveals his plan to him — he intends to gain control of every key transportation industry in the United States. As his first big step, Roberts is to be killed and one of the Octopus's henchmen will take over his post. Roberts makes a lunge for the Octopus to try and kill the apparent cripple. But suddenly, a third arm (!) appears, gun in hand, and Roberts is shot. The Octopus then orders his men to go after their next victim: Richard Wentworth!

Little does the Octopus know that he is asking for more trouble than he imagined, for Wentworth, while appearing to be a millionaire socialite and amateur dabbler in criminology (highly respected in that area), leads a double life. Believing that the law is too hampered by rules and regulations at times when dealing with gangsters Wentworth has adopted a secret identity, that of the Spider, mysterious, masked vigilante whose methods have made him feared by the underworld. However, they have also caused the Spider to be hunted by the law with a price on his head, dead or alive. Only Wentworth's lovely fiance, Nita Van Sloan, his faithful Hindu servant Ram Singh, Ronald Jackson (Wentworth's aid during World War I) and Jenkins, Wentworth's butler, know of the Spider's true identity.

But at this moment, Wentworth and Nita are flying back to New York in Dick's private plane, planning their long postponed wedding. As far as Wentworth is concerned, the Spider has retired and is in mothballs. If only he knew.

Awaiting Wentworth's arrival at the man's private airfield is Jackson. But several gunmen working for the Octopus attack the field. Jackson is holding them off as a large limousine pulls up outside the radio shack and a bearded, turban-wearing man appears. This is Ram Singh. Meanwhile, other gunmen have set up a cable across the airfield moments before Dick's plane comes in for a landing. Dick and Nita spot the cable too late and the landing gear and rudder are damaged. Dick pulls the plane up and the two bail out, letting the ship crash. Dick joins Jackson and Ram Singh, helping them drive off the hoods. Ram Singh is to take Nita along the Jefferson Highway to Dick's home. Jackson tells Dick that Police Commissioner Kirk, an old friend of Dick's who has often suspected him of being the Spider. Dick is contacted by Kirk, who informs him that he received a threat to blow up the Jefferson Highway Bridge!

Dick, realizing the danger to Ram Singh and Nita, speeds after their car, forcing them off the road moments before the bridge is blasted to bits. Nita is injured, and the two men take her to the hospital. There, Dick is told that she'll be all right after a night's rest. Later, at Commissioner Kirk's office, Dick is given the details of the situation in New York and is told of the discovery of Robert's corpse in the river. However, Dick informs Kirk that they may have a witness and they go to the hospital once more. However, they find their witness dead, killed by some unknown poison gas.

As they leave the hospital and separate, Dick is accosted by a hunchbacked beggar, who draws a gun and forces him into the limousine where Ram Singh is tied and gagged. The two are taken to an old house on the East Side.

Meanwhile, the Octopus has given orders to his men regarding one of his most monstrous crimes; he intends to destroy the Roberts bus terminal with hundreds of men, women and children inside at a peak hour!

Dick and Ram Singh have managed to escape their bonds, and Wentworth recognizes the house as a hideout of the Gallagher gang, a group of killers brought to book by the Spider. Spotting two heavies carrying an unconscious bus driver, Dick decides to learn what's going on and begins to go through a quick series of make-up manipulations, assuming a third identity — Blinky McQuade, expert safe-cracker. In this guise, which has been accepted by the underworld, Dick has picked up valuable information. Ram Singh is to wait in the car.

Running into two of Blinky's old criminal friends, Dick learns the plan — the stolen bus, loaded with several pounds of dynamite, will be used to blow up the city bus terminal! Dick joins Ram Singh and they speed for the terminal. Inside the car, Dick removes his McQuade disguise and proceeds to don the hood, cape and gloves of the Spider!

With only a few minutes to go before the time bomb in the bus is set off, Ram Singh and Spider arrive at the side entrance of the terminal. Inside the terminal, people are going about the usual business, some even seating themselves inside the doomed vehicle, No. 26. Deciding on quick action, Ram Singh races to the center of the terminal and starts firing a gun, while the Spider suddenly races through the crowd and bounds onto a ledge, warning of the impending disaster. People panic and rush for the exits as thugs, planted by the Octopus, start firing at the Spider, who engages them in battle, disposing of some them with his sharpshooting. Ram Singh is to wait at the automatic bunker as the Spider gets into the bomb-loaded bus and drives it for the side of the terminal. He races it into the bunker when it is blasted to bits with the Spider apparently inside!

(Continued On Page 8)

NO. 2: DEATH BELOW

As the bus hurtles toward the bunker alcove, the Spider leaps out from the vehicle and rushes to join Ram Singh, pulling a lever sending a huge steel shutter sliding down moments before the bus explodes, blocking off most of the blast. The two rush for the exits just as two policemen appear and fire at the Spider, who makes his escape by leaping from a high window. The Spider jumps onto the running board of a passing car, making the driver pull alongside the Wentworth limousine. He transfers to the limousine and Ram Singh drives off, stopping by a phone box. There, the Spider phones Comm. Kirk and tells him of the Gallagher hideout being used by the men of the Octopus.

Kirk arrives with a riot squad, only to be met by Wentworth who leads them. Kirk and Wentworth walk into a trap when the room where the kidnapped bus driver was held suddenly turns into a sealed off death chamber. A steel shutter blocks off the door and windows and poison gas fire crackers are dropped in. Dick manages to short-circuit the electricity closing the doors and gets Kirk out of the room in time. In the raid, members of the gang have either been killed or made their escape.

At the headquarters of the Octopus, the mystery chief is chastising one of his agents, Merkle, for allowing Dick and Kirk to escape from the trap. Dismissing him from the organization, the Octopus tells Merkle to go through an indicated door. Merkle thinks it is an exit, but instead walks to his death, destroyed by an unseen electrical machine. His death scream causes the Octopus to smile grimly.

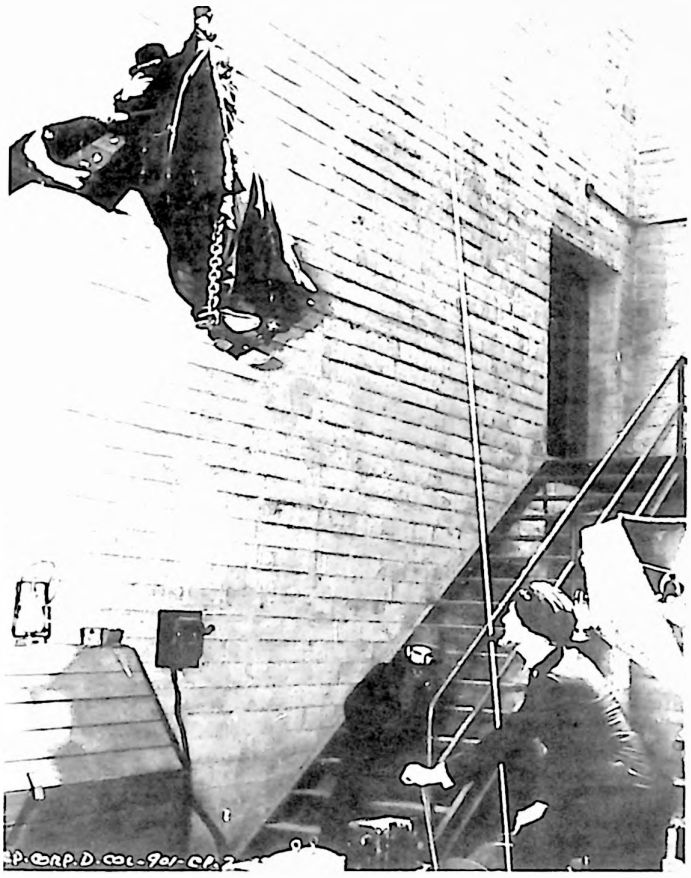
Later that day, in Kirk's office, the leading member of the transportation and industrial companies are meeting with the Commissioner when Dick enters. He shows them an ominous article; J.R. Adams, unknown in transportation circles, has been appointed to the post held by the late Roberts (Ep. 1) Wentworth suspects something is up and promises further developments. When the industrialists leave, Dick tells Kirk that he intends to see and hear everything that goes on in Adams' office.

That night, in his home laboratory, Dick is making final adjustments to his television reception unit as Jackson and Ram Singh look on. The device works. The trio watches Adams and his men being addressed by the unseen Octopus who tells them of a plan to eliminate Richard Wentworth. To this end, he has had Nita kidnapped and drugged. Dick reacts in shock as the girl is brought into the office. He intends to walk into the Octopus's trap, as the Spider. Ram Singh is to stay behind while Jackson drives him to the Roberts Transport Building.

In an alley outside the building, the Spider and Jackson overpower a watchman sitting by a mechanical hoist. Jackson operates the controls as the Spider rides the cable. He is carried to the top floor of the huge building. Meanwhile, inside, Adams and his men are warned by the Octopus that the Spider is in the building. Adams activates a control that, he explains, electrifies the metal on the floor. If the Spider touches even a doorknob, he'll be annihilated. Ram Singh has been watching this over the television device and rushes from the room to go to the aid of the Spider.

Some time later, Dick and Jackson, disguised as telephone repairmen, go to Adams' office, after secretly causing a malfunction in Adams' telephone. While 'repairing' the circuit, Jackson plants a special book in Adams bookcase. Within the false book frame is a miniature televiston camera and sound unit (RCA, take note!)

Making his way through the office corridors, The Spider is jumped by a gunman, but in the fight, the thug is hurled against Adams' office door. He's electrocuted. The Spider realizes what is going on and dons a large rubber glove from a hidden pocket within his cloak (?) and breaks into Adams' office, using the dead gunmen as a shield. After locking Adams and his men in the office vault, the Spider and Nita start to make their way out of the building. But as they head for the stairs, Steve, the Octopus's chief lieutenant and trigger-man, and several gunmen appear, forcing the Spider and Nita to head for the window where the hoist cable is waiting. Jackson starts to lower them to the ground.



However, two of the gang appear and attack Jackson. In the ensuing fight, the control of the winch is knocked into high speed and Nita Van Sloan and the Spider, clinging to the cable, are hurled hundreds of feet to their doom!

NO. 3: HIGH VOLTAGE

As the Spider and Nita plunge towards the street, Jackson is knocked down and about to be shot by one of his attackers just as Ram Singh arrives. The valiant Sikh uses his knife-throwing skill to dispose of the gunman and gets to the hoist controls in time to stop the hurtling descent of his master and Nita. Ram is ordered to take Jackson and Nita home while the Spider goes back for Adams. Releasing Adams from the office vault, the Spider calls the police to take care of the other heavies.

Commandering Adams' car, the Spider and his captive drive off. But Steve and two of his men, still after the Spider from the earlier gunbattle, give chase and as the Spider prepares to make Adams tell what he knows of the mystery madman, force the vehicle from the road. The Spider manages to jump in time, but Adams is killed in the crash as the car explodes in flames.

The Spider slips past Steve and his men when they stop and go down to check on their work and steals the thugs' car. However, the Spider does know the name of the mysterious gang leader and that he contacts his men by radio.

The following day, Dick is furious at news stories of Adams' death that suggests that the Spider was responsible. Jackson spots two gunmen watching the house, and Dick realizes that this is a move by the Octopus to eliminate him. At Wentworth's orders, Jenkins, the majordomo, phones Roy's flower shop and orders some 'special flowers.' When the messenger arrives, Wentworth dons the man's clothing and slips by the men of the Octopus. Driving to a garage, Dick drives off from there in an old jalopy after assuming his Blinky McQuade disguise.

At a cheap cafe he asks for Frank Martin, one of the gunmen in Adams' office, and is told Martin will be in later. Blinky leaves. Meanwhile, the Octopus is informing his agents that the 'big job' will be that evening. Also, the Spider is to be eliminated once and for all.

At the cafe later, Blinky finds Martin and gets him to let him in on a job, a raid on a warehouse. Blinky will drive the getaway car. But at the robbery, the police show up. Blinky 'rescues' Martin and the two drive off in a police car. Hiding out in an East Side apartment, Blinky goes for medicine for the wounded Martin and calls Jackson who arrives sometime later in a policeman's disguise. Martin is sent out to escape, by the fire escape, while Blinky is 'arrested.' In the Wentworth limousine, Dick starts donning his Spider identity while telling Jackson to step on for the West End Power Plant; the big job is to sabotage the place, which will plunge the whole city into darkness.

By the time the Spider arrives, Steve and his men have broken into the power station. The Spider enters via the roof skylight and begins firing his automatics at the thugs before they can wreck the power board controlling the dynamoes. One heavy, his gun empty, jumps the Spider from a catwalk, but is knocked out. However, this leaves the Spider open for attack and Steve and his men rush at the masked man. A punch from Steve sends the Spider hurtling into the panel board where a flash of electrical sparks and smoke erupts and the Spider crashes to the floor, apparently electrocuted!

(TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS TURN TO PAGE 11!)

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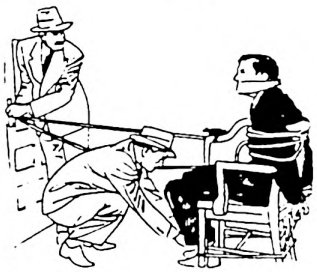

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NO. 4: SURRENDER OR DIE!

As the Spider falls to the floor of the power house, police officers, attracted by the shooting, break in. Steve and two men escape, while the others are captured, The Spider, only stunned by the electrical jolt, comes to and escapes, during the confusion, to the roof where he lowers himself to the street via his 'web' rope and drives off in his car.

Later, at Nita's apartment, Dick, Jackson and Nita are trying to figure out the motive for the Octopus's attacks when a phone call from a young gas station attendant gives them a new clue. Wentworth aided the young man in putting together a short-wave set for broadcasting on a little used band, the Hertsel Band. He tells Dick of picking up strange messages. Dick drives out to the station and he and the youth hear a mysterious voice reading a message in a code of letters and numbers.

In a secluded house, a heavy named Whitey is contacting the Octopus via radio, informing him of their own successful use of the Hertsel band, but that another radio picked it up. The Octopus orders the other station destroyed. Whitey and two gunmen drive up to the station and kill the attendant and destroy his radio station with a hand grenade.

At Nita's apartment, Dick has managed to decode the cryptic message of letters and number via the dictionary as the key. Something is to happen at 8:00 that night, but what? As Dick leaves to do some more checking, he is accosted by two of the gunmen of the Octopus near the elevator, but through his skill, knocks the two men out and rushes back to Nita's apartment, only to find it shambles. He also finds a note telling him to await a message from the Octopus.

Arriving at his house, Ram Singh tells Dick of a call saying that a deal will be made for Nita and Jackson the next day. Dick decides to use radio triangulation to pick up the enemy station and possibly find out where the girl and Jackson are being held. With their equipment, Ram Singh and Wentworth listen in on another broadcast and hear the Octopus boasting of a massive stroke; the entire city will be in darkness and all radio communication will cut off, all stations put out of commission. The broadcast is picked up by Police Commissioner Kirk as well, who orders a major deployment of all the police in the city.

That night, Dick and Ram Singh go to their triangulated location, a secluded, fenced-in house used as the pirate radio station. Managing to escape an electrically charged fence, the two break into the house and separate. Dick is now the Spider.

Ram Singh is captured and comes to in a dungeon-like room, chained to the wall are Nita and Jackson. At the orders of the Octopus, his men turn a valve releasing a flood of water into the room from several pipes. Within a short-time, all three prisoners will be drowned like rats!

Meanwhile, the Spider has entered another room via the window and comes upon several men playing cards. A gunfight ensues, but the Spider is holding fast in the room. Whitey, seeing that gunfire won't finish the Spider, hurls one of the insidious poison-gas firecrackers into the room and locks the door. The Spider starts to feel the effects of the gas and makes for the window. However, Whitey anticipates this and turns a control, releasing a flood of live steam into the room. With the combination of poison gas and the live steam assailing him, the Spider crashes to the floor! Has the Spider finally been defeated by the agents of the Octopus?

NO. 5: SHOOT TO KILL!

As the combination of poison gas and steam fill the room, the Spider manages to get to his feet and open the window, escaping the room in time. Meanwhile, the water is rising rapidly around Ram Singh, Nita and Jackson, with the voice of the Octopus taunting his prisoners. Ram Singh, his courage still with him, snarls a simple threat to the Octopus — to cut out his heart.

Whitey is radioing the Octopus when the Spider breaks in and shoots the killer in a gun battle. The Spider knocks out two other thugs and smashes the radio. He hears Nita's scream and races to the door of the water room. Shutting off the flow of water in time, the Spider opens the door in time to let the rush of water knock down several heavies. Freeing Nita, Ram Singh and Jackson, the Spider leads his group out of the house with the Octopus minus one 'arm.'

At his headquarters, the Octopus, in a rabid fury, is chewing out two of the heavies who survived the Spider's assault on the radio station. The police arrived shortly afterward and arrested everyone they found. Determined to eliminate the Spider once and for all, the Octopus shrieks at his men to get out.

At his home, Wentworth informs his aides that the underworld has the word to get the Spider. But the Spider intends to force the Octopus into the open as well. Wentworth finds the perfect means in the paper; the Roberts and Bus Co. is holding a benefit for the family of the bus driver murdered earlier. Dick decides to do his old magic act (in training for MANDRAKE THE MAGICIAN, no doubt) and contacts the office of the newspaper sponsoring the event, The Clarion. His services are accepted.

Via his contacts, the Octopus learns of this and decides to use this to kill off both Wentworth and the Spider.

The following day, at Comm. Kirk's office, Kirk is questioning Dick about Ram Singh's prowess with a gun, explaining that when the police arrived at the house used as a radio station by the henchmen of the Octopus, a turban was found. Just then, the editor of the Clarion bursts in with a note purportedly from the Spider, threatening Wentworth's life. Dick convinces Kirk it's a crank letter, nevertheless knowing who actually sent it. However, Kirk says there will be police protection all the same. The Clarion will play the letter up big, ridiculing it.

Meanwhile, at his hideout, the Octopus gloats over the apparent success of his plot and starts issuing orders for the destruction of The Spider and Richard Wentworth.

However, when Steve and some of his men arrive at the box office of the terminal, they are given seats in a certain row (the 15th) at Wentworth's signal. In his dressing room, Dick is finishing giving Nita, Jackson and Ram Singh their instructions. Outside in the audience, Steve and his men suspect a trick and one of the gunmen sneaks up to the catwalk and takes over the big spotlight. A few minutes later, Nita introduces Wentworth who comes out to do his magic act. As Wentworth begins, Steve and his men pull out their guns and fire point-blank at Wentworth.

Panic ensues as the audience panics. Just then, the Spider appears from a side of the building and a gunbattle ensues between the masked man and Steve's henchmen. The thug on the catwalk, spotting the Spider, waits until the crime-fighter is in the right position and pushes the spotlight. Nita screams and the Spider looks up to see the huge spotlight come crashing down directly towards him!

NO. 6: SEALED LIPS

The Spider leaps out of the way in time and the light smashes to bits upon the bus terminal floor. Police arrive and drive off the gunmen as the Spider escapes via a side door. On the stage, bedlam reigns as Kirk anxiously asks Nita about Dick. The girl explains that what happened was part of Wentworth's plot. The figure the thugs shot at was not actually Wentworth, but an image thrown by a project (WHAT!!!!!). Ram Singh suggests that they check the dressing room. There, they find Wentworth bound and gagged. He tells them he was knocked out by an unknown party and Kirk prepares transportation for Nita, Jackson and Ram Singh while Wentworth plans to stick around and see if any of the gunmen are still around.

When Steve and his men see Kirk and Wentworth come out of the bus terminal, they start shooting as they drive off. Kirk and Wentworth give chase, but stop when a newsboy is knocked down by the heavies. Dick goes to help the boy while Kirk continues after the gunmen. The youngster is only shaken and Dick takes the youth, Jimmy Sands, to his home, an apartment where he lives with his sister, who reacts oddly toward Wentworth.

At his home, Dick reveals to his aides that one of the gunmen left a clue; a paper with the name of Jim Spencer, a small-time hood running a bookie joint. Wentworth visits Spencer's hangout as Blinky McQuade and leaves a note tipping Spencer off to a 'police raid.' After McQuade leaves, Spencer makes a phone call, disregarding an apparent solitary drunk. The 'drunk' is Jackson who counts the clicks of the phone dial to the number, and hears the message. Before Spencer leaves, Jackson knocks him out. Dick returns and the two check the number, finding it to be possibly the first real lead in this mysterious case.

Dick's investigation reveals that the city bank is expecting a valuable gold shipment and is sure the Octopus plans to hijack it. He also discovers that Jimmy Sand's sister works at the bank as a telephone operator. The next day, Miss Sands gets a note prepared after listening in on a call to the bank manager. She has one of the other girls take over for her and leaves, but Wentworth and Nita intercept her and take her to Wentworth's house. Nita takes over at the switchboard the next day, while Dick is behind one of the teller's booth. Nita is recognized by a thug who fires at her, but misses. Dick kills the man in quick gunplay, while the rest of the gang, led by one Spike Mallean, fire at the bank. They are driven off, but Jimmy, the newsboy, spots Spike, Wentworth suspects that the gang may try to kill the boy and gets him to his house where he and his sister are reunited.

Meanwhile, the Octopus starts giving orders for his agents to steal the gold shipment. The theft is foiled by Wentworth and Jackson, who pursue the fleeing heavies. Wentworth dons the garb of the Spider as the thugs hurl hand grenades at the pursuing limousine to try and stop it. The Spider gets onto the running board of the car and when his vehicle pulls up to the heavies' car, transfers over, slugging it out with the thugs. The car goes out of control near a power station and crashes into a large transformer. There is an explosion and the car is enveloped in thousands of volts of death-dealing electricity!

(Continued On Page 13)

NO. 7: SHADOWS IN THE NIGHT

As the car hurtles toward the transformer, the Spider knocks out his opponent and leaps from the doomed vehicle before its occupants are electrocuted. Jackson drives up and he and the Spider check the vehicle, with the masked man leaving the stamp of the Spider on the forehead of the driver.

At his hideout, the Octopus is coldly going over the failure of the gold robbery and is now telling his men that he wants plans of all electrical and burglar alarm wiring. And as for Jimmy, the newsboy who saw Spike Mallean, he must be eliminated. Why? Because Spike is very much alive, having also jumped out of the car in time before it hit the transformer.

The next day, Jimmy spots a car with Mallean and three thugs passing by. The youngster gets to a pay phone and calls Wentworth. Wentworth has Jackson see that Jimmy gets home safely while he and Ram Singh decide to try and spot the thugs. Suddenly, a car, while apparently parking, backs into another vehicle causing a disturbance. Dick suspects something. He's right. Mallean and two men enter the apartment house where Jimmy lives. Wentworth decides on desperate measure against Ram Singh's warning; the Spider must appear during the daytime, despite the danger of the police spotting him. The reward for the Spider, dead or alive, is in effect.

The Spider climbs up the fire escape of the tenement building, but is spotted by an old woman washing her clothes. She calls the police. Meanwhile, the three heavies have broken into the boy's apartment and find him hiding under some blankets on the couch. They are starting to drag him away when the Spider enters. One thug is shot and the other wounded as Mallean escapes. However, a policeman, answering the old lady's phone call, enters through the window and fires at the Spider, who uses the wounded thug as a shield. The thug is killed as the Spider races from the room down the stairway. But he's trapped for two policemen are coming upstairs, and two more from above. Trapped, and not wanting to have to shoot any of the law officers, the Spider escapes by shooting at a fire extinguisher, puncturing it. The stream of liquid blinds the policemen for a moment, allowing the Spider to head back for Jimmy's room and out through the fire escape.

Quickly removing his hood and mask, bundling it up, Wentworth enters the old lady's apartment as a terrified man being chased by the Spider. Getting past two cops with the same act, Wentworth rejoins Ram Singh and Jackson, ordering them to follow Mallean's car.

The trail leads to a garage. Inside, Mallean has spotted the trio and tells Steve. Steve orders several heavies to take positions in the garage, while Mallean hides. Wentworth and Ram Singh enter a few minutes later with Steve covering them, gloating over their apparent capture. But Wentworth and his servant manage to turn the tables and drive Steve and his men off. Mallean is shot by Jackson and before dying tells Wentworth that the Octopus has something planned for that night. He has maps of the city wiring set up.

The Octopus has given his men the maps of the burglar alarms and now proceeds to chastise Malloy, who was to

keep a watch out for Wentworth, who gave him the slip. Malloy protests his loyalty to the Octopus who coldly watches him. The thug panics screaming he isn't going to get it the way Merkle did, and starts to pull his gun. The 'third hand' of the Octopus flashes out and the thug is finished.

Meanwhile, Dick and his aide are mapping out their plan for thwarting the latest move by the Octopus. Jackson, on patrol, spots a car knocking over fire hydrants. Dick, patrolling another part of town, calls his house and Jenkins informs him of Jackson's report. Dick tells Ram Singh what has happened, sure that it is a diversion by the Octopus. He and the valiant Sikh drive out to the area. They spot a man scrambling out of a manhole, and stop. Dick and Ram Singh go down to investigate and find a burglar alarm wire cut. Dick splices it and prepares to await developments.

Meanwhile, a group of gunmen have tunneled into the bank vault and are starting to work on the safe. However, with the burglar alarm device active, the bell rings and the bank's defensive measures begin. Tear gas bombs drop from the ceiling to confuse the thugs for a moment.

Wentworth, meanwhile, has donned the guise of the Spider as Ram Singh drives for the nearby bank where the alarm is ringing. in the bank vault area, one thug, blinded by the gas, stumbles against a slowly closing gate charged with electricity. He is electrocuted instantly. As the others continue their work, the Spider appears. A gun battle ensues during which one thug is wounded. But another gunman, evidently stationed as a guard, sneaks in behind the Spider and knocks him out with a fire extinguisher. The thugs, seeing it's useless to continue their work with the burglar alarm going, the police on their way, flee, as the vault gates, jagged edged, continue to close with the Spider lying between them. The gates continue to close in and suddenly there is a flash of electricity! Is this the end of the Spider?

NO. 8: WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS

The gates hit the fire extinguisher used to knock out the Spider. The metal object halts the closing of the gates as the Spider comes to and gets out of the way before the gates come completely together with an electrical discharge. The Spider escapes from the bank vault before the police enter and joins Ram Singh, driving off into the night.

Later, Kirk decides to help Dick on a plan to trap some of the men of the Octopus and strike a blow at the mysterious egomaniac. A meeting is announced to be held at Kirk's private club. At the meeting will be various transport and communication figures of the city.

The Octopus makes plans to eliminate Wentworth at the dinner after the information Wentworth plans to relate is given. The Octopus will give the signal for the killing; he is actually one of the men who will be at the meeting!

At the meeting that night, Dick informs the industrialists that a new type of airplane motor is being devised at his airport that may help beat the Octopus and his attacks. Unnoticed by Kirk and Wentworth, one of the guests (identity hidden from the audience) is using a toothpick to punch an X on a dinner roll. An agent of the Octopus, disguised as a waiter, takes it to a man outside. This informs them that whatever they are to go after is at the airport. But when a group of gunmen arrive, they find themselves trapped by Jack and several policemen. Dick is notified of what happened and tells the guests of the captures. Suddenly, the lights go out and a gun at the window fires at Wentworth. However, Wentworth moved in time and escaped death. The meeting is adjourned amidst confusion and excitement.

Infuriated by the blow Wentworth has struck at him, and desiring to get the Spider, the Octopus has word spread through the underworld grapvine that Steve, his chief lieutenant, has broken with the gang. As 'Blinky' Wentworth learns this and decides to check it out. He phones Steve and, as the Spider, offers a deal for Steve to get even with the Octopus. The two are to meet that night in the city park. Steve finds the Spider sitting on a bench, and suddenly fires at him. But it's a dummy clothed in an extra costume. The Spider drops down from a tree and tries to capture the thug, who manages to escape.

The next day, Kirk and Wentworth decide to try a new plan to learn the identity of the Octopus. They will have a social gathering of the suspects, with Kirk escorting Nita, who will try to pump the suspects. However, some of the Octopus gunmen run Kirk's car off the road after a chase, during which Kirk has let Nita out by some brush. The girl sees Kirk being kidnapped and jumps onto the back of the enemy vehicle as it drives off.

Kirk's kidnapping causes panic in the police department. Dick and his aides are concerned for both Kirk AND Nita, who hasn't been heard from. Determined to strike some kind of blow, and certain that Steve may be able to give a clue to where his friends are being held, Dick puts a plan into action. Steve tells the Octopus that the Spider has challenged him to a showdown near the park. Steve will go in a double-deck bus, followed by a heavily armed escort. This time, the Octopus is sure the Spider will be eliminated.

That night, as the bus rolls along, the Spider, perched on a building ledge, using a cable for a rope, swings down on the bus. He and Steve slug it out, as Ram Singh, wearing a slouch hat instead of his usual turban, drives up to the bus. The two fall off the bus into the car and continue battling it out as the car containing the men of the Octopus pursues Wentworth's vehicle. Steve manages to gain control of the car and, as it enters the waterfront zone, drives it off a pier into the city bay's treacherous waters with himself, Ram Singh and the Spider aboard!

NO. 9: DOOMED

Ram Singh and the Spider leap from the car onto a boat dock before the vehicle plunges into the bay and sinks with Steve aboard, ending his career of murder permanently. Jackson, who has followed his chief, drives up and the group heads back for Wentworth's house. Later, Dick, Ram Singh and the others are still concerned over the disappearance of Nita and Kirk. A police dragnet has been unable to uncover anything. Dick decides that Blinky McQuade might be able to find out something. Going to the dive where Pete Martin hangs out, Blinky is playing pinball when Martin walks in. A squad of police enter, arresting all suspects. Blinky and Pete are arrested, with Blinky protesting his lawyer will get him out. A short time later, the two are released.

Later, Nita calls Dick at his home, telling him that she is at a gas station in tye country. She knows where Kirk is being hidden. The Spider is about to strike again! The Spider, Ram Singh and Jackson pick up Nita with the Sikh to take the girl home while Jackson and the Spider prepare to tackle the farmhouse up ahead. 'Borrowing' a car from a startled motorist, Jackson drives up to the house, saying he needs some water. While the 'farmer' goes for some, Jackson goes inside the house and finds a trap door.

However, he's knocked out by the farmer. The man and his wife carry the Spider's agent down into the basement. Tied, Jackson comes to and sees a huge device, a gigantic ray cannon, to be used in a new plot by the Octopus. Red, the man in charge of the group of thugs there, orders truth serum used on Jackson to find out what he wants.

The Spider, worried about Jackson's long absence, sneaks into the house and finds the trap door. But the 'farmer' and his 'wife' attack him. The farmer is knocked out and the Spider has to shoot the 'woman' (a doubtful identity) in order to stop her. He then blocks the trap door with tables and chairs. Red's men go out by another way via the cellar door. The Spider takes care of them. He gets into the basement and frees Jackson. Jackson leaves as the Spider finds and frees Comm. Kirk. The gang returns, however, and cover the Spider and Kirk. Red is about to unmask the Spider when Jackson appears and shoots out the light. A gunfight ensues during which Kirk is wounded, but the Spider and Jackson get him away. Jackson takes the Commissioner to the place where the police can find him, then is joined by Dick. They head back for home.

The Octopus is raging mad when he learns what happened. Wentworth, the Spider and the others must be stopped before word leaks out about the super-ray gun and the owner of the old house is uncovered.

Kirk calls Dick the next day with news of the location of the house, after Dick has told his group his suspicions regarding the ray gun. Dick and Jackson are going to check with the real estate board on the ownership of the house. But through a tap on the line, Red learns of the plan.

With a henchman, Red and an aid get to the top of the elevator shaft and begin to sever the cable. Dick and Jackson are on their way up when the cable is severed by several well-placed shots by Red and his aide. The elevator containing Dick, Jackson and the elevator operator plunges down the shaft at nightmare speed, carrying the trio to certain destruction!

NO. 10: FLAMING DANGER

As the elevator plunges out of control down the shaft, the elevator operator manages to activate the emergency brake system, stopping the elevator car in time, saving all from destruction. All that Wentworth, Jackson and the operator can do is wait until the maintenance men lower the car via hydraulic devices. Dick is certain that the plunge of the elevator was caused by agents of the Octopus.

At his headquarters, the Octopus is told by Red of the failure to kill Wentworth. The Octopus orders him to continue trying to eliminate the criminologist. Red and two of his men break into Wentworth's house, but a special electronic warning system has alerted Dick. The three gunmen find Ram Singh and Jackson, but Wentworth enters from behind them with twin automatics in hand. A gunfight ensues with two gunmen killed, and the third taken care of by Ram Singh's skill with the knife. Wentworth contacts Commissioner Kirk, telling of the attack, and informs him that he is going out to the city airfield.

At the airport, Wentworth is joined by the station manager Blaker. One of the man's planes is in the air and he's worried. Unknown to Wentworth, he has been followed by one of the agents of the Octopus, who is contacting his chief. Inside the radio shack, Dick and Blaker are trying to contact the missing plane by radio, when they come upon the radioman giving directions of the plane's route.

In a wooded area outside of town, a huge camper-trailer has been towed onto a field. The top opens and a large machine, the incredible ray gun Dick found in Ep. 9, rises up like some prehistoric monster. As the missing plane passes overhead, the ray gun is started. Dick and Blaker, after knocking out the traitorous radio operator, try to contact the plane, only to hear the pilot yelling that his ship is being pulled by some force. The ship crashes to earth in flames.

Moments after the plane crashes, Blaker receives a phone call from the Octopus warning him to cease all plane flights or else they will meet the same fate as the destroyed airship. Wentworth is not to interfere either, or Nita, prisoner of the Octopus, will suffer.

In a dingy building outside of town, Nita, guarded by a woman, manages to escape and phones Dick's home, giving Jenkins her location. The butler informs Dick when he gets home and Wentworth races to the rescue. Meanwhile, the Octopus's gunmen have discovered that their prisoner is gone after she overheard them talking about the deadly ray gun. They pursue her to the roof. The Spider appears in time to rescue the girl and as he resumes his normal guise, Nita informs him of the ray gun. Dick knows what that means and heads back for his house. There, he phones Blaker at the airfield, warning him of the danger. The harried manager tells him that the mail plane has just taken off and can't be turned back.

Dick, Nita and Ram Singh arrive at the airport with Wentworth taking off in a small plane to warn the mail ship of its danger. The ray-gun has been started and as Dick spots the mail plane, his ship is seized in the force of the gravity beam. The ship starts to catch fire, while Nita and Ram Singh, following Dick in the Wentworth limousine, stop and watch horrified as Dick's ship plunges toward the ground in flames!

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!

WHO IS THE OCTOPUS?

NEW COPPERHEAD'S PAL SERIOUS CINEMA STUDENT DANNY AMORELLO

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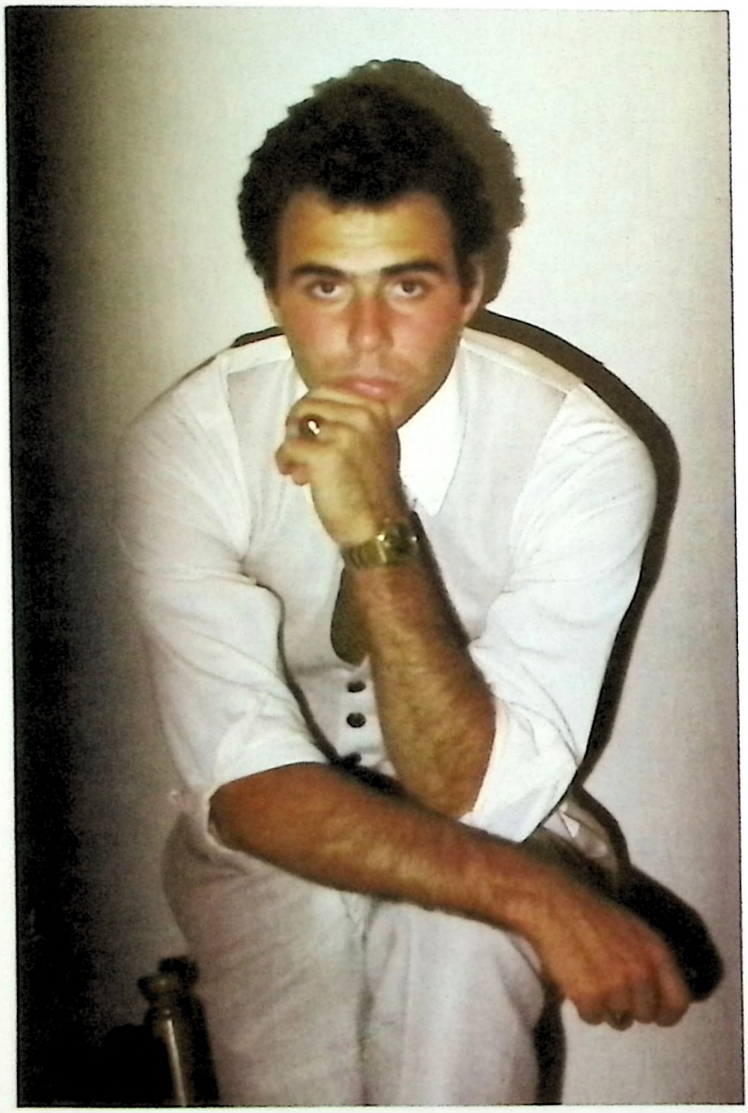


Jeff Stevens Aka Danny Amorello

By Jeff Walton

It was mid-winter and while temperatures were below freezing in Worcester, Mass and a minus 50 wind chill factor, young 22 year old actor-writer Danny Amorello and I sat poolside at his Hollywood Hotel discussing his career and current production of "RETURN OF THE COPPERHEAD," the new serial currently in production and the first one filmed since Columbia lensed the last one in 1956.

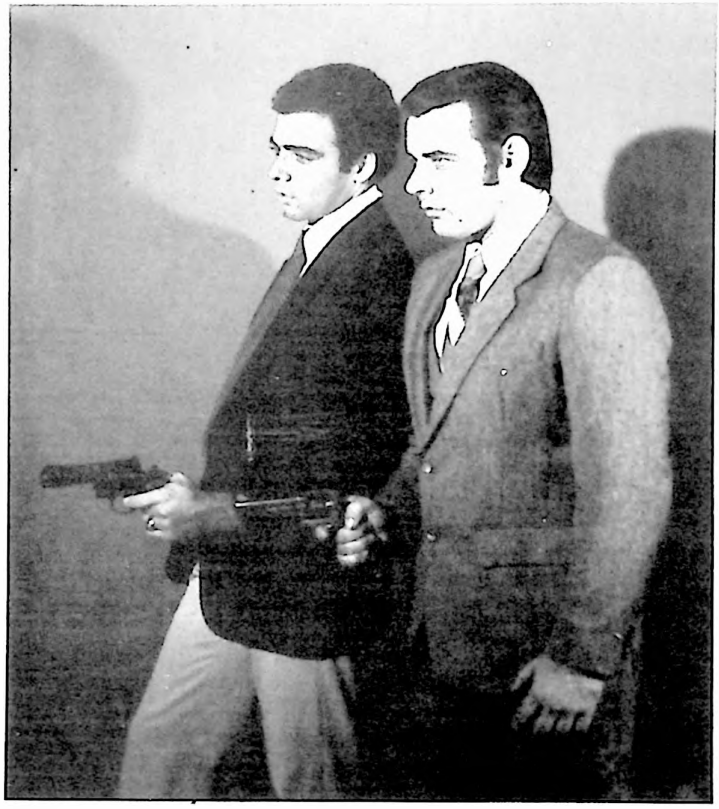
Danny plays Jeff Stevens pal of Bob Wayne, the grandson of the original "COPPERHEAD." Jeff is Bob's college roommate and assistant in the investigation which will lead them on a dangerous trail of the sinister "Raven."

It was early in 1981 when Danny was spotted by director Blackie Seymour for the likeable role of Jeff Stevens. Blackie asked if Danny could act and with a positive answer told the youngster to report to work on Saturday as filming would begin. Even though Dan had an acting background in both high school and college he was not very pleased with his work in the very beginning of filming and after seeing some of the rushes felt he wasn't right for the part. Blackie Seymour saw it otherwise and with his faith and energetic drive spurred Danny further to get into the character. In no time Dan gained the confidence he needed. Today Danny has fun with the character and has even molded Jeff Stevens into himself. He's treated the character with respect. Most important he's having fun with the role.

While acting is not Danny's main dream in life, comedy writing is. "I want to be a comedy writer," Danny told SERIAL WORLD. He loves to write short stories and has written quite a few. The main reason Danny ventured to Hollywood was to meet several people in the field of comedy and writing. He met director Jerry Paris, actor Henry Winkler, all around star Alan Alda and Ed Asner to name but a few. He was very impressed by what these talented folks had to say, but was not impressed with Hollywood itself. "It's a nice place to visit, but...," as the saying goes.

Danny is very proud of "RETURN OF THE COPPERHEAD" and his face beams with pride at the mere mention of it. He talks to everyone and anyone about the subject. "Blackie Seymour is directing, and the whole project is being done in black and white following all the serial rules very closely. It's a very serious project. No part of the serial will be shown until the final foot of film is finished. Hopefully the film will be completed by the end of this summer," Danny told us on the QT.

Both Danny and Blackie would love to get in touch with George Lucas, who of course brought us "RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK," the serial-like feature film last year. "Even if it were for only two minutes," we would be most grateful to Mr. Lucas," Danny remarked.



Danny Amorello and Michael Vaughn — stars of "Return of the Copperhead," a new Major Serial Production.

There are many facts about RETURN OF THE COPPERHEAD which we at this time cannot print. We do however know that many distributors are interested in the serial and anxiously awaiting the final results. Cable TV is also a possibility.

"Is a big name star necessary," we asked Danny. "At first, I thought it was, but I don't feel that way now. People want to see a good serial and not necessarily the stars in it."

"Any accidents on the set Danny?" "Yes, happened to me in fact. It was a fight scene in Bob Wayne's office. Mike Stone and I had been rehearsing and had it all planned out. Came time to shoot the scene Mike took off his glasses. I said "HEY MIKE, will you be able to see?" and he said 'Sure.' Blackie yelled, "ACTION" and Mike hit me square on the jaw. Down I went and when Mike came over to revive me and help me up he added to the hurt by stepping on my foot. But if it looks good on film I don't mind at all."

It's that kind of attitude that makes Danny Amorello a real pro. I wished Danny luck and from our short meeting I knew that either as an actor or a comedy writer, this young man would make it. The NEW Copperhead can be proud of his loyal friend.

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A PREVIEW IN PHOTOS OF THE NEW SERIAL ADVENTURE STILL IN PRODUCTION — "RETURN OF THE COPPERHEAD"

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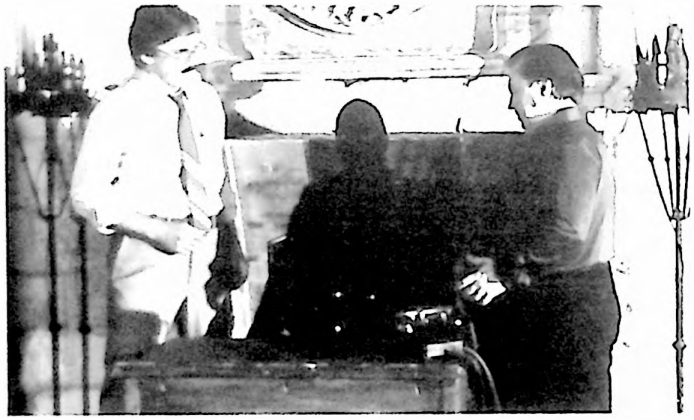
"The Raven" leader of the crime ring attacks Joan Parker (Jane C. Moore) before she can aid her companion Jeff Stevens.

Director Blackie Seymour instructs "The Raven" on how to handle a future serial queen in this production still from "Return of the Copperhead."



Rankin (Andy Maddocks) and Corey (Director Blackie Seymour) two of The Ravens henchmen await further instructions from the chief villain.

Joan and Jeff (Danny Amorello) watch viewing screen with Prof. Parker (Tim Waite) for Raven's next attack.

THE GOOD
Copperhead and Joan

VS.

THE BAD
Corey and The Raven

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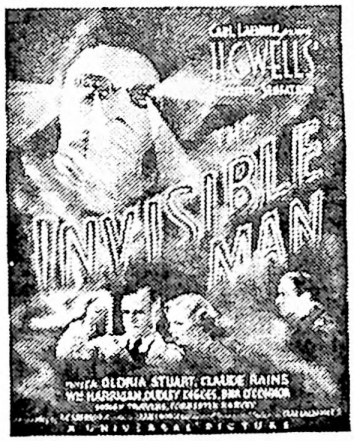

Republic CONFIDENTIAL

A BOOK PRESENTATION OF

JACK MATHIS ADVERTISING

A PROGRESS REPORT

February, 1982 — No. 5

Another exhaustive year of work was completed in 1981 encompassing several key areas for our next book entitled REPUBLIC CONFIDENTIAL, which will present an objective overview of the entire filmmaking operation at Republic Pictures from the studio's rousing origin in 1935 through its untimely demise in 1959.

Complete compilation was concluded on a compendium of every Republic mention in five leading Hollywood trade publications. Over 20,000 articles were unearthed, furnishing a film buff's delight of Republic in print. Though there was some exaggeration in the figures presented for public consumption, the straight news stories provided significant supplemental material on personnel movements and developmental projects well beyond what could be gleaned from studio files. The sales meetings, corporate details, franchise purchases, and special promotions were all treated quite extensively in the press. This voluminous scrapbook will be invaluable for reference in piecing together the history of Republic, which will be formulated mainly through documentation from the studio's confidential records and correspondence buttressed by a wealth of notabilia from production dossiers all so neatly preserved over the years.

Also virtually finished was a Super-Index of players in Republic films. Every artist whose name appeared on-screen is carried, but that hardly scratches the surface. Included are 4486 performers showing literally thousands of uncredited roles. The 230 films of Roy Barcroft are listed as well as 92 for Bobbie Dorree and 44 for Adele Mara; even three for Tommye Adams, two for Rondo Hatton, and one for Barrie Chase. Every contract package was thoroughly scanned along with screen-billing jackets to pinpoint players including hard-to-identify stuntmen who kept their faces carefully hidden from the camera while executing thos daredevil maneuvers which were the hallmark of Republic fare.

The Super-Index doesn't stop there. It also features comprehensive lists of credits for 1129 technical personnel such as directors, producers, writers, composers, directors of photography, film editors, art directors, and selected other luminaries who worked in special capacities for Republic over the years embracing talent the likes of Hermes Pan, Edith Head, and Larry Ceballos.

According to first projections, the Super-Index will extend close to 150 pages in a five-column format, prepared with pictures. It will proffer the ultimate in credits ever amassed in particularization of any motion-picture studio.

For preparation of the Super-Index, cutting continuities and contract packages were closely perused ahead for films as yet unscreened to make up preliminary master casts-and-credits sheets, which are subsequently being double-checked when the title is officially processed. Occasionally we'll pick up additional credits visually for some important faces in the crowd, otherwise undocumented because they were non-contract extras without dialogue, such as Jack O'Shea or the brothers Burns (Bob and Fred) or the redoubtable Stanhope Wheatcroft.

Kudos must go to our supereminent associates on these two infinitely demanding projects, which stretched well over two years in essaying. Both Anthony Slide and Val Almendarez worked tirelessly in researching and supplying the material from trade papers, even offering perceptive insight into the more complex areas of such a far-reaching undertaking. And then there was the dedicated herculean effort of FILMOGRAPHIES meticulous Richard B. Smith III who brought everything together into its final form on both extremely difficult assignments, turning out a remarkable mountain of precision from what was a tedious task at best. The assembled publication articles, placed day-by-day in chronological order over the 25-year period, stack up to a height of nearly six feet.

More Republic films were viewed, screen credits checked, and concomitant story synopses written. This casts-credits-synopses section will be an important one in the book, running probably 500 pages plus of the estimated 1300 total pages. Because this is such slow and methodical work, it is the single major reason that matters have dragged on so long. It takes large chunks of time on each film to note exact screen credits and write fresh, detailed story synopses.

It has yet again been suggested that for hurry-up purposes we could just pick up casts-credits-synopses material from the readily available studio-prepared publicity releases, pressbooks, or still manuals. That would certainly be easy, following in the footsteps of many before us who have utilized this time-saving method, which would have enabled the book to be in print by now.

But, just as this approach was scorned early on, we still reject it now. First, we feel that in order to properly present a definitive volume on Republic it is absolutely essential to be completely familiar with the product they turned out by seeing their whole output, not just a smattering here and there is typical. Even though the book is not subjective in nature, we still want to be solidly conversant with the entire spectrum of releases for authoritative reference in writing the text. Second, and more important, much studio ballyhoo was written from advance shooting scripts and didn't reflect accurately what was in the final cut. No, the book's integrity rules out that inaccurate procedure.

Also, the story synopses are being effectuated in a highly structured manner. All players credited on screen will be denoted in the storyline, and the plot will unfold exactly as it does on film. The reader should be able to follow the exposition clearly, even in the twists and turns of those underrated mysteries.

Generous assistance on story synopses has been provided by the talented scribe of THE TAPE TRAIL, Chuck Anderson, a recognized authority on westerns. And we again received a helping hand from Merrill T. McCord who put in long hours at the Library of Congress to unspool unwieldy 35mm film from the archives.

Typesetting commenced this month on 158 story synopses, with more to follow at regular intervals. Over 700 casts-and-credits sheets will be marked up ready for keyboarding by mid-year. Output will be on the revolutionary Linotron 606, an awesome technological wonder that spits out over 1800 lines per minute.

So when will the book be out? Figure two years after all films are screened, which we hope will be before the end of 1983. A publication date with a nice ring to it would be March 28, 1985, since it would mark the 50th anniversary of the organization of Republic. Or August 19, 1985, would be 50 years from the studio's first release of WESTWARD HO. Both dates might be premature. We will have a much better handle on a projected publication date in our next report.

In 1945, World War II was winding down and Republic was celebrating its 10th year in business. On the back page are pictured 12 of the most scintillating term-contract beauties who ever graced any Republic films, with the years of stock servitude listed just after their names. Familiar faces such as Mary Lee, Jane Frazee, Lynn Merrick, Fay McKenzie, and Anne Jeffreys weren't under term deals at that time, and Arlyn Roberts and Sheila Stuart were finishing while Vera Ralston's tenure turned into a picture-commitment basis.

VALLEY OF THE CLIFFHANGERS was sold out early last year shortly after the progress report. It is now permanently out of stock and never again available.

Republic-related items are becoming more prominent. Alan Barbour has recently begun publishing a weekly SCREEN NOSTALGIA NEWSLETTER which includes capsule synopses on "Republic's Forgotten Films" as well as commentary and a host of lists; for information, write to him at Box 154, Kew Gardens, New York 11415. Five Republic soundtrack albums — RIO GRANDE, THE LAST COMMAND/COME NEXT SPRING, THE ETERNAL SEA/MAKE HASTE TO LIVE, SANDS OF IWO JIMA/THE SUN SHINES BRIGHT, and JOHNNY GUITAR — are available from PBR International, 13006 Saticoy No. 2, North Hollywood, California 91605. And The Nostalgia Merchant, Suite 1019, 6255 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, California 90028, keeps adding to its very impressive video list of Republic serials, westerns, and John Wayne features.

We'll keep you informed of the book's progress, probably next February. And you'll receive advance information on publication date and details on ordering. Let us know if you have an address change. If you don't wish to receive any further reports, please advise and we'll remove your name from our list.

As always, we welcome any comments you may have on REPUBLIC CONFIDENTIAL, and we appreciate your continuing interest and patience. Note our new address.

Yours sincerely,
JACK MATHIS ADVERTISING

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5 TOP SERIALS * A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

By Jim Hitt

(1) CAPTAIN MARVEL (1941) — This may seem like a conservative choice for the greatest serial ever made, but nevertheless it is a superior piece of filmmaking. Certainly, it represents the highwater mark of the William Whitney-John English collaboration. The script is both logical and fast moving, although like most serials the characters, for the most part, are comic book heroes and villains, which, in this case, are ideal, since Captain Marvel is taken directly from the comic books.

The cast is uniformly good, especially Tom Tyler in the lead role. The character of Captain Marvel was given added dimension by the addition of a ruthless streak, as exemplified by the scene where he casually tosses one of the villains off the roof of a multi-story garage. Kenneth Duncan always managed to give good performances as a henchman, and his villainy in this film is excellent as he follows the orders of the Scorpion. The Scorpion himself is a masterful creation. Of all the masked villains of serial world, the Scorpion can stand at the head of the line. The voice of Gerald Mohr made him seem both effective and dangerous, and his identity was well kept until the last chapter. The clues to his identity were evenly and fairly distributed.

But in the real test of a serial, CAPTAIN MARVEL captured all the necessary ingredients. The fights were superb, and above all, Dave Sharpe's stunts highlighted all twelve chapters. What a thrill it is to see him leap and soar through the air! If a highlight film were ever made on Dave's marvelous career, the scenes from this film and MYSTERIOUS DR. SATAN could comprise the entire footage.

Even with all the action, the story remained strong. Constantly the audience was kept in touch with who the suspects were and what the Scorpion was after. All in all, this ranks as the greatest serial ever made.

(2) FLASH GORDON (1936) — On the list of ten greatest, this is the only serial to come from Universal. Certainly that studio made a handful of other good serials, among which were the often underrated RIDERS OF DEATH VALLEY and JR. G MEN, but they never again matched FLASH GORDON, although they came close in the first sequel. Universal simply didn't know how to make great serials. Even their best efforts, such as the two listed above, usually had cliffhangers that were weak and ineffective, and rarely when the cliffhangers were good or superior, the resolutions were a letdown.

It is interesting to note, however, that this film not only comes from Universal, it is also the serial with the earliest date. Also, Frederick Stephani, the director, directed only this one serial during his career. The camera angles alone testify to the care he put into making this serial.

As with CAPTAIN MARVEL, this serial, too, was adapted from the comics. Buster Crabb was exactly right to play the title role, as was Jean Rogers to play Dale and Frank Shannon to play Dr. Zarkov. But it was in the villainy that this film is also impressive. Charles Middleton as the Oriental appearing Ming almost stole the show, and of all the serial villains, he is perhaps best remembered by the general public. Of course, the Flash Gordon serials have had the most exposure on television, but Ming the Merciless would be remembered in any case.

The cliffhangers themselves vary in quality, although most are at least adequate, as are the resolutions. The conclusion of the first chapter has one of the all time great cliffhangers, comparable to the end of chapter one of DAREDEVILS OF THE RED CIRCLE where Charles Quigley races for his life aboard a motorcycle through a tunnel just ahead of a wall on onrushing water. In FLASH GORDON, the hero and Ming's daughter are dropped into a bottomless pit on the orders of Ming, and from above, the camera watches as they fall away.

For a serial, FLASH GORDON also had one ingredient that no other serial ever had — at least in so great a supply. Sex! Flash was in love with Dale, but Ming lusted after her, and he constantly made plans to make her his bride. Ming's daughter, Aura played beautifully by voluptuous Priscilla Lawson, was constantly trying to seduce Flash into leaving Dale and coming with her. Prince Barin, played by Richard Alexander in one of his few sympathetic roles, was in love with Aura. The costumes, often showing a generous supply of flesh for those days, displayed various parts of the well-endowed bodies of the four lovers. Ming's body was kindly allowed to hide under several layers of robes.

Even if this serial had been made by Republic at its height, it is doubtful the serial could have been done any better. The fight scenes might have been improved upon and the action would have moved along a little faster, but even in 1936, Republic had not fully mastered its techniques. In its time, it was the greatest serial ever made. It has not fallen far since.

(3) THE LONE RANGER (1938) — This is an outstanding serial in many respects. From the outset, Witney and English and their writers planned this as a fifteen chapter episode, only the second of all their serials to that time to rate the extra chapters, the other being DICK TRACY made the year previously. As with most of the best of Republic's chapter plays, this one, too, was based on a comic strip, with a few subtle differences. From the middle of the first chapter on, the audience knew that the Lone Ranger was one of five rangers, but which one of the five was kept a secret until the final chapter. That in itself was an exciting departure from previous serials. Other serials had masked villains who were finally unmasked at the end, but this was the first time the hero was unknown to the audience until the end.

The five rangers were well played by Lee Powell, who, of course turned out to be the Lone Ranger, Herman Brix (Bruce Bennett), Hal Taliaferro (Wally Wales), Lane Chandler, and George Letz (George Mongomery). Billy Bletcher's voice for the masked man was just right, making him appear strong and determined.

The story was strong, although it had been used before and would be used again by all the major studios making B westerns. The idea of a carpetbagger dictator trying to run Texas was just too good not to use. Stanley Andrews as Jeffries, the dictator, was appropriately menacing.

The action was fast throughout the serial, but unlike the later Republics, it never took over from the story. The cliffhangers were often outstanding. The first chapter ended with the Lone Ranger standing at the gate of the fort shooting down Jeffries men and they tried to ride him down. Another chapter ended with the ceiling of a cave full of sharp stalactites falling on the Lone Ranger. While the resolutions never quite reached the overall greatness of DAREDEVILS OF THE RED CIRCLE, they were uniformly adequate and fair. Taken as a whole, this is the greatest western serial of them all.

(4) SPIDER'S WEB (1938) — While Columbia made some of the worst serials of all — some so ridiculous that they were actually comedies in disguise, such as IRON CLAW and SON OF THE GUARDSMAN — it seldom made a completely boring one. Now and then that studio made a good one, and on at least two occasions, it made great ones. THE SPIDER'S WEB was the first of its great serials.

Warren Hull played three roles — Richard Wentworth, Blinky McQuade, and the Spider. While not necessarily a versatile actor, Warren Hull nevertheless had the ability to pull off his three parts with aplumb. Iris Meredith played the love interest and Keene Duncan played the faithful Ram Singh, a sympathetic part for a change. In this chapter play, the Spider fought against the evil Octopus, a masked villain.

There are perhaps more deaths in this serial than any other. The Spider does not mind killing his opponents. Indeed, in one chapter he shoots an old lady in the back. Of course, the old lady was one of the Octopus' men in disguise. As chapter one unfolds, Warren Hull as both Richard Wentworth and the Spider meets the Octopus' men with both .45's blazing, killing the villains right and left.

MORE TOP SERIALS ON PAGE 24!

THE PHANTOM OF THE AIR?

VINTAGE CLIFFHANGERS — By Jim Stringham

FROM THE MOTION PICTURE SERIAL "PHANTOM OF THE AIR"
COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

First aid — Col. Johnson looks on as Thomas Edmonds and Mary attempt to revive Bob Raymond after his plane crashes.

Chapter 2: The Secret of the Desert

Ground crewmen run up and pull Bob from his plane before the blast. He is stunned, but quickly recovers and agrees to fly with Edmonds to his desert plant. Crome receives word of an important shipment coming over the border, and leaves after assigning Skid to trail Raymond and the others. He goes to his International Import and Export Company, where we learn that he is the leader of a gang of modern smugglers who use fast planes equipped with two way radios. Blade tells what he has learned of Contragrav — a priceless secret which could be sold to any of the world's major governments. Skid arrives to report trailing Edmonds to a remote desert airfield.

The scientist shows Bob a laboratory hidden below ground level in a building there. He has remote control equipment that, with the Contragrav unit, can transform a plane into a pilotless "Phantom of the Air." His lab is filled with traps for any intruder. A gas used in the preparation of Contragrav can kill within minutes, and a lever will detonate explosives to destroy the entire base with just three minutes for its occupants to escape. The chamber is sound proof, and airtight except for the ventilation system. Bob agrees to take the first Phantom up, then transfer control to Edmonds' ground unit.

A periscope gives a view of the fifty miles surrounding the field, and the inventor sees Bob zoom skyward at a rate impossible without the Contragrav. He takes control, stunts the ship, then brings it in for a perfect landing. He drives off with his assistant, Munson, on another project. Blade and his men have flown to the field, and they cut their engine and glide silently in. They surprise Bob and Mary coming from the lab, and, in the resulting fight, Raymond battles a heavy for possession of a pistol. Another attacker stuns him. As he falls, the gun fires, sending a slug crashing into the retort of gas. The gunmen run out as it explodes, flooding the room with poisonous vapors. Mary and Bob collapse in the deadly fumes.

Chapter 3: The Avenging Phantom

From their car, Edmonds and Munson see the smugglers' plane descend, and they rush back to the field, arriving in time to pull Raymond and Mary to safety as the ventilators clear the gas from the room. The heavies take off, then circle overhead to await further developments. Bob spots them through the periscope, and takes off after their ship in a conventional plane. Mary follows him across the desert in her car. There is a dogfight in which Raymond, trying to control the ship as well as fire his service revolver at the enemy, is shot down. Mary cracks up the car while watching the battle. The outlaw plane lands, but, as the smugglers head for the downed craft, Edmonds sends the Phantom against them. The unpiloted ship dives at them, driving them off with bursts of machine gun fire. It lands, and Bob and Mary climb aboard. The heavies return to their own plane, and, at Crome's radioed orders, fly back to Edmonds' base. They burst into the control room, where the inventor and Munson are guiding their ship back. They fight. The Phantom goes out of control. A lever designed to destroy the craft in case of emergency is pulled, and the Phantom crashes to the ground and explodes.

Chapter 4: The Battle in the Clouds

Bob and Mary bail out when the Phantom goes out of control. Scotty, a desert rat, encounters them and gives the two a lift back to the field. The heavies are forcing Edmonds onto their own plane as they arrive, and Bob fights them. Outnumbered, he is losing until Scotty opens up on them with his ancient gun. They flee in their ship. Raymond's furlough has ended, and he returns to duty.

Crome learns that Bob is on patrol again, and prepares a trap. He sends a decoy up, with a second ship following. Raymond's moves are reported by Durkin, a spy in the patrol hanger. He spots the first outlaw ship. Mary, meanwhile, goes up in another quickly prepared Phantom with a key to unlock the remote control in the event of any malfunction. It falls from her pocket as she takes off. Bob finds himself between two enemy planes, and is hit by a shot. He crashes head-on into Skid's ship. Both fall to the ground. Faulty wiring of the hastily installed Contragrav unit sends Mary's Phantom out of control, and she discovers the key has disappeared. The girl is helpless as the ship spirals downward to certain destruction.

Chapter 5: Terror of the Heights

Mary sees the key slide across the floor, and grabs it in time to release the controls. Mort sends a carload of gunmen to the wrecks. The girl buzzes them, then lands near the crashed planes as Bob climbs clear. They take off under fire when the smugglers approach. The heavies find Skid to be only shaken up. Mary and Bob return to the field, where his wound is treated. Learning that the patrolman was hurt, Crome realizes that a section of the border will be unguarded, and orders a shipment sent across immediately.

Raymond suspects that he was attacked to open the border, and borrows a plane from Edmonds to return to duty. Convinced that he is still weak from his injury, Mary follows in the Phantom. Meanwhile, the patrolman en-

counters the smugglers' craft and is immediately in another fight with them. The girl sees him take a hit and slump down in the cockpit. The outlaws flee as they recognize the approaching Phantom. Mary has her father take control of her ship, then climbs to the wing as he positions her directly beneath Bob's plane. She transfers aboard and works her way to the cockpit. The big patrolman is jammed against the controls. As she struggles to move him, the ship goes into a spin. It dives directly at a massive concrete bridge as the episode ends.

Chapter 6: A Wild Ride

A lurch of the careening plane shifts Bob's body, and Mary is able to operate the controls in time to send the plane through the arch of the bridge. Edmonds brings the Phantom in. Crome orders his men to attack again, but Bob and Mary are saved when they encounter a flight of Navy planes. Mary lands at the Border Patrol field, where the inspector sends Raymond out to investigate a tip that there is contraband aboard a ship anchored in the harbor. Durkin, Crome's man at the field, warns the gang.

Skid leads his men in an ambush at the waterfront, and Bob is captured after a quick fight. Other smugglers chase Mary as she is driven back to her father's base. one boards her car, which cracks up as he struggles with the driver. She is taken away. Bob comes to in a speedboat crossing the harbor and battles his captors. When Jerry, a patrolman assigned to back him up, dives his plane at the craft, Raymond signals him to drop a rope ladder and transfers to the government ship. Jim, Mary's driver, reports that the girl was taken toward Pine Mountain, and Jerry heads in that direction. They spot the smugglers' open car, and, as Jerry flies directly over it, Bob drops into the speeding vehicle from the rope ladder. He battles the heavies. A stray shot hits Jerry, bringing down his plane. Then, the car goes out of control. It smashes through a guard rail, rolls down a steep cliff, and crashes.

Chapter 7: The Jaws of Death

Bob grabs Mary and jumps clear before the car plows through the barrier. They find Jerry in the downed plane, only slightly injured. The gangsters, surviving the crash, arrive as they have the patrol ship ready to fly. The gunmen open fire, but the plane takes off. Bob and Jerry deliver the girl to her father's field. Learning that Raymond has escaped again, Crome sends Blade to prepare a trap aboard their ship, the Lottie Carson. She lies outside the three mile limit, but they are convinced the patrolman will make some move against her.

Bob has authority to board any abandoned ship. He persuades Edmonds to loan him a Phantom, armed with bombs. Mary is sent to bring harbor police to the scene to pick up any escaping smugglers. Raymond circles the ship and drops a warning to leave her at once. Then, he begins dropping bombs around the vessel. Blade ignites a fuse to blow the ship up, destroying all evidence against them. He and his men take a case containing the most valuable contraband and pile into a fast boat as Bob's bombs fall closer. Mary and the police chase them in a speedboat. Edmonds takes control of the Phantom, circling it close to the rigging of the old schooner. Bob jumps to the mast. He descends to the deck and searches the ship. The police are in a running battle with Crome's gang. Then, the Lottie Carson is destroyed in a terrific explosion.

Chapter 8: Aflame in the Sky

Opening a hatch, Bob had spotted the fuse burning in the explosives filled hold and jumped overboard moments before the blast. The harbor patrolmen abandon the chase to go to his rescue. Blade and Skid deliver the case of contraband to Crome, reporting that Raymond died when the ship went up. Skid is ordered to deliver the case in his speedplane, but with a bomb prepared to destroy the ship if there is danger of capture by the border patrol.

Reporting in, Bob learns that Skid's plane has been spotted heading in his direction. Edmonds loans him a new Phantom, fast enough to catch any conventional ship. Gloria again follows in the car as Raymond takes to the air. The Phantom easily overtakes Skid's craft and matches its evasive maneuvers. Bob has Edmonds take control and guide her over the enemy plane. Skid sets the time bomb and bails out. Raymond drops into the abandoned craft and lands it. As he pulls the case out, an explosion blasts the ship apart.

Chapter 9: The Attack

Mary rushes up to find Bob only stunned by the explosion. Skid sees them drive off, and reports to Crome that they have taken the contraband to the desert field. Mort and a henchman plan to land there as friends, after which the gang will attack at precisely three o'clock. A rigged wheel is released from their ship. Then, they drop a message requesting help. Bob takes up the Phantom, attaching a spare wheel while Mary pilots the plane.

Landing, Mort explains that he and his partner were traveling to a gold mine. The heavies move in quietly, then rush into Edmond's quarters. In the fight, they carry the inventor and his daughter to a plane. Bob battles the attackers, but Mort Crome draws a revolver, takes careful aim at him, and fires. The border patrolman falls to the ground.

(Continued On Next Page)

Chapter 10: The Runaway Plane

Bob jumps up and continues the fight. Mort's second shot wounds a henchman who crosses his line of fire. Raymond saves Mary, but Edmonds is already aboard Crome's plane. The smugglers taxi it at Bob, who runs clear then jumps to the wing. They knock him off and fly away. Crome is loading the contraband into the Phantom when his wounded gunman begs for help. He knocks him to the ground and starts the engine. Bob runs up and joins Mort when the smuggler claims to be chasing the men who stole his plane. They take off with Crome at the controls.

Mary and Munson help the wounded gangster. Furious at the double-cross, he tells them that Mort Crome is the leader of their enemies. Mary radios a warning to Bob, but Crome overhears it and covers Raymond from the rear cockpit. Bob grabs at the gun, and after a brief struggle, wrests it away. He orders Crome to bail out, then moves back to the pilot's seat. Mort lands near the car carrying part of his gang from the airport and takes them back. Overtaking the enemy plane, Raymond tries unsuccessfully to force it to land. Then, he radios Munson to take control of the Phantom and drop it down into position for a transfer. He climbs to the wing, unaware that Mort is leading his men into Edmond's lab. As the heavies grab Munson, Crome announces: "I'll drop Captain Raymond down...right down to earth." He cuts the contragrav off, sending the Phantom into a spinning dive to the desert below.

Chapter 11: In the Enemy's Hands

Mary enters the room and fires a shot into the retort of poison gas, startling the smugglers. Munson reactivates the remote control in time to save the plane. He tells Bob the situation while Mary covers their enemies, then calls the sheriff. Mort disarms Mary, who is weakened by the gas. He demands the contragrav, but Munson explains that the only remaining unit is in Bob's Phantom. They lock the girl in a storeroom, tie up Munson, and prepare an ambush for the returning pilot. Meanwhile, Edmonds' captors land at another field.

Crome shoots Bob down when he lands. Now in possession of the Phantom and its contragrav unit, he and Blade take off with Mary in the ship. Bob revives and frees Munson. Unaware that Mary is aboard, he takes control of the plane and dives it. Mort bails out. Raymond finds the girl gone from the storeroom, realizes she is in the Phantom, and radios her. She had disconnected the contragrav unit, then taken over the plane when Blade lost his nerve. Bob goes after them in his old ship. The sheriff arrives at the field, leaves one of his men on guard, and goes off in search of Crome. When the Phantom runs out of gas, Mary lands in the desert. Mort sees her come down. Blade is shot when he flees from the arriving lawmen. Raymond lands and joins Mary and the others around the mortally wounded criminal. Mort reaches Bob's plane and takes off. Blade is about to tell where Edmonds was taken, but dies as the episode ends.

Chapter 12: Safe Landing

Bob orders every patrol plane up to seek his stolen ship. The sheriff calls out the national guard, then leads his men in a ground search. Crome returns to his hideout and questions Edmonds, who explains that the secret of contragrav is contained in papers and equipment in his own laboratory. Mort orders him to contact Munson by radio. Learning that Bob and Mary are up in the refueled Phantom, Mort and Skid drive to the desert field with their prisoner. Munson contacts the plane, and Raymond leaves the radio open. He hears Crome and Skid arrive at the lab and gun down Munson. He races to the field.

Edmonds pretends to capitulate out of fear for his daughter's life, although he is convinced that his invention, in Crome's hands, would endanger humanity. Opening the vault, he throws a switch designed as the final protection for his secret. Mort and Skid struggle with him, but are unable to stop the device he has activated. Coming in, Mary and Bob see the entire plant destroyed by an explosion. Crome is dead in the wreckage, but they find Edmonds alive. Munson, only wounded, comes in. Bob embraces Mary, then flies off with her in a Phantom at the fadeout.

The End

TOP SERIALS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

The cliffhangers are often good, but seldom, if ever, more than that. The first chapter ends with the Spider in a bus that explodes. Another chapter he is in an elevator that is falling out of control. The resolutions are merely adequate. For instance, the falling elevator is resolved simply by stopping itself, and the operator saying that all elevators have safety cables. Columbia seldom took time to come up with really outstanding cliffhangers and resolutions. Despite this fault, this remains one of the all time great serials with enough action for three or four chapter plays.

(5) ZORRO'S FIGHTING LEGION (1939) — This, of course, is another Republic and another Witney-English combination. The casting of Reed Hadley as the foppish Diego who is in reality Zorro was perfect. His deep resonant voice was later used to good advantage in other ways. This serial also supported a masked villain, Don Del Oro. There is a council of six or seven, anyone who could be the masked villain, and his identity is well hidden until the last chapter.

Like most serials from Republic, this one had plenty of fast and believeable action, well handled by Yakima Canutt behind the mask. He had done the same in ZORRO RIDES AGAIN, and it is a credit to Republic and Witney and English that they did not use stock footage from the earlier serial. Extensive use of stock footage was not far down the road from this studio. The fight scenes, although they did not have the smoothness of some of Dave Sharp's brawlers, carried conviction, and Yakima Canutt's use of the whip in several key episodes added to the overall effectiveness. Zorro definitely emerged as a strong and believeable hero.

The cliffhangers were consistantly good to great. The first chapter ends with Zorro caught on a cliff that is blowing up above him and about to send down countless tons of rock on his head. The resolution is logical and believable. Using his whip, he snares a tree across the gorge and swings to safety at the last moment.

This serial also has one highlight the others listed here did not — an original musical score and a song, "We Ride," written by William Lava.

WEEKEND focuses in on the film scene and rolls out the hot rock

UNTARNISHED GOLDEN OLDIES

Hang on for serial suspense

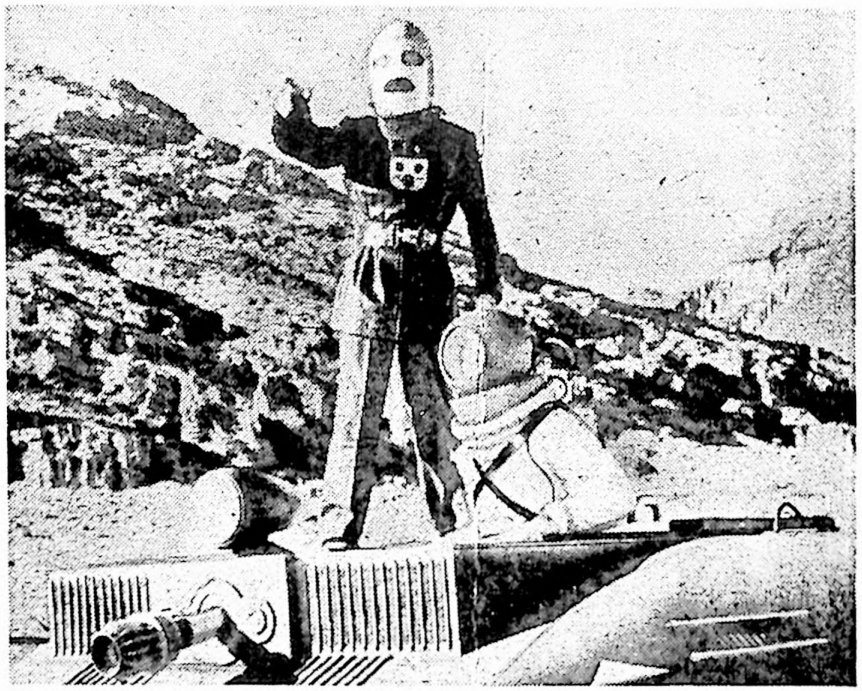
INDIANA Jones, the swashbuckling adventurer of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, had better watch out. America's lastest movie hero will be up against some hefty competition.

The big box-office success of *Raiders*, a throwback to the action serializations of the '30s, '40s and '50s, has prompted RKO to re-release a series of "cliffhangers" at 24 theaters for midnight showings.

These films were orignally released in a story form that left the viewer "hanging" at the end of each chapter, with the hero or heroine in apparent danger.

This weekend, for the first time, all the chapters of these films have been edited together to make a feature length film.

The series showcases throughout the metropolitan area.



"King of the Rocketmen" will be one of the features in "Cliffhanger" series featuring adventure flicks from the '30s, '40s and '50s.

Manhattan theaters include **The St. Marks** (Second Av. and Eighth St.), which is screening *The Panther Girl of the Kongo*, **RKO 86th St.** (Lexington Av. and 86th St.), offering *The Purple Monster Strikes* and **Olympia Quad**, (Broadway, between 106th and 107th Sts.) which offers *Radar Men From the Moon*.

Check movie clock for times and locations.

—SUSAN FRIEDLAND

Our thanks to Gary Spencer of Rye, New York for passing this good news on to us. How was attendance?

SERIAL HEROES ON RECORD

By Paul McBride of Lancashire, England

I. FLASH GORDON

In an age of heroes, he was the hero. Blonde, athletic, dauntless and daring. While lesser mortals busied themselves with the paltry affairs of our own little planet, his eyes were on the Universe. Even his name conveyed a sense of anticipatory excitement.

Flash Gordon — ace of the spaceways, scourge of the despot, conqueror of every major entertainment medium from comics, through movies, T.V. and radio, onto books and records.

Records?

Yup, records.

Over the last decade or so, Flash has chalked up an impressive selection of adventures on vinyl. So, if you're a Flash fanatic and already have the three classic serials on 16mm or video, and have all the Nostalgia Press re-prints of the Alex Raymond strip but still crave for more, why not switch on to the audio exploits of thrilldoms prime exponent.

FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS — LP 2006 — Released 1976.

PELICAN RECORDS P.O. BOX 34732 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90034.

This is a condensed (60 minute) adaptation of the original soundtrack of the 1938 movie serial. The major plot elements are all included: Flash's journey to Mars to destroy the terrible Nitron Lamp of Ming and Azura, which is steadily draining vital Nitron from the Earth's atmosphere; befriendment by Azura's enemies, the tragic Clay People; the successful quest to procure the black sapphire of the fierce Forest Dwellers, which can neutralize the magic power of Azura; the lifting of the Clay Curse; destruction of the Lamp and the deaths of Ming and Azura. All the fascinating, nostalgic sounds we forever associate with the Flash Gordon serials are faithfully reproduced, from the marvellously appropriate background music to the sputtering rockets, the sizzling death-rays and the crackling laboratory hardware. Not forgetting, of course, the feverish dialogue of the actors concerned. But then who could forget Buster Crabbe's energetic Flash, the patriarchal tones of Frank Shannon's Zarkov, the delightfully feminine Jean Rogers as Dale and the sneering bravura performance of Charles Middleton as Ming the Merciless?

Recording quality is very good and, while the sleeve design is somewhat static and lacking in imagination, it is not unattractive. A word of caution, however. Since the record presents an audio version of what was originally a very visual serial, it is necessary to have seen the movie in order to fully follow what is going on. Nevertheless, it is a fine package for those who can't afford to purchase the original serial or those who prefer to screen these fondly remembered adventures in the best of all places — the theatre of the mind.

The record is not listed in Pelican's latest catalog, so may now be out of print. If so, you can still probably pick up a copy from dealers at any S.F./Comic/Nostalgia Convention.

FLASH GORDON — Released 1973.

MARK 56 RECORDS, P.O. BOX ONE, ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA 92805.

The first dramatization of the comic strip adventures of Flash Gordon was on radio, via a weekly 15 minute program which commenced shortly after the debut of the strip in January 1934. These shows were designed to promote the cartoon version which was then appearing in Hearst's "Comic Weekly" Newspaper Supplement. This record presents two 15 minute, random episodes of the radio series which, at the time, was recounting the original 'Flash on Mongo' storyline covered in the first movie serial.

Side I picks up with Flash, Dale, Thun, Barin and Zarkov held captive by Ming's soldiers on a Gyro ship en route for the floating Prison City of the Hawkmen, perched perilously 5000 feet above the ground of Mongo. Flash and Thun break free and, in the melee which follows, the ship crashes. Dale, Barin and Flash narrowly reach the safety of a nearby forest, but Thun and Zarkov are captured by swooping Hawkmen and taken to the floating city. However, due to the treachery of Ming's daughter Aura, the three fugitives are soon apprehended and taken to the floating prsion, where Flash is sentenced to toil as a slave, stoking the great atom furnaces which power the anti-gravity beams of the City. True to form, Flash isn't down for long. With a shout of "Better death than slavery," he leads his fellow captives in revolt, and arrives at the Throne Room of bluff King Vultan just in time to rescue Dale from the proverbial 'faith worse than...!! However, when victory seems almost assured, the stupendous City begins to topple out of the clouds...CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.

Side 2 moves to the "Witch Queen of Mongo" segment.

Dale and Zarkov administer an antidote to the letheum 'drug of forgetfulness' which has been given to Flash by Azura, Queen of the Magic Men, thus restoring his memory. While under the influence of the drug, Flash has been led by Azura to believe that he is her obedient soldier lover. The revived Flash turns the tables on the Witch Queen by tricking her into taking letheum. With her memory a blank, Azura is readily convinced that Flash is King of Magic Land. In a shrewd attempt to assess the strength of Azura's vast armies, he orders a military review. As legion after legion sweep by below the Royal Balconey, Azura's loyal military adivsor, General Thahl, attempts to assassinate Flash. The heroic earthman soon overcomes the General and, in keeping with the time-honoured dictates of Arthurian chivalry, promptly hurls him over the thirty foot high Balcony...END OF SIDE 2.

Due to the age of the recordings, reproduction is only adequate, there being some surface noise and 'fading,' particularly on Side 2. Sound effects are sparse and crude by current standards, but overall, the episodes have simple yet infectious appeal.

Of particular interest to the serial fan is the possible influence the radio show had on the Universal movies. I've always wondered how Universal got the idea to use semi-classical background music in a 'thud and blunder' chapterplay. Well, the answer may well lie in the fact that the radio adventures had a similarly styled musical accompaniment.

(Continued On Page 27)

Again, the voices of the main characters are very similar to their movie re-incarnations. This is particularly noticeable in the case of King Vultan, who was represented in both media as a belly-laughing, lecherous but lovable Falstaffian rogue.

The album is attractively packaged, the jacket boasting an eye-catching pose of Flash rendered in beautifully subdued pastel shades. The back of the sleeve reproduces a nice example of the Raymond comic strip, circa 1935, and includes short liner notes by radio historian Jim Harmon.

Although the radio adventures did not always follow the exact chronology of the comic version, most of the dialogue is taken directly from the Raymond strip.

And what dialogue it is!

E.g. **Dale** (to Flash after he has just rescued her from the carnal clutches of Vultan.) "My darling, I feel so safe in your arms. They're so strong yet so tender."

Flash "These arms were meant to hold and protect you and, by Heaven, they will as long as they have life!"

Ah, those were the days.

SERIAL MAILBAG

Dear Sirs:

I enjoyed **SERIAL WORLD** No. 28 very much as I have likewise enjoyed all the other issues. However, on page 11 of issue 28 you made an error when the article states, "On Bob Wayne's desk is a photograph of David Wilcox, an actor who played The Copperhead in 1940's "MYSTERIOUS DOCTOR SATAN."

It was the late actor Robert Wilcox who played The Copperhead in that serial.

Please inform the readers of this in the next issue, and do keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Steve Pellicani

Dear S.W.,

I am writing to you requesting subscriptions and back copies of Serial World. I had sent a letter to Jeff Walton around October 4th but it must have gone astray.

As stated in previous letter I, like all connected with Serial World am a serial fan. As a young lad of 14 in 1948 I saw 3 serials each Saturday matinee. We all liked the film of the day but the serials were the real drawcard.

Interest was rekindled when a local television channel played early morning daily chapters of selected serials over a 4 month period. Fortunately during that time our friend Kirk Alyn was featured in Blackhawk. Tongue in cheek stuff but enjoyed particularly by my wife Audrey (Kirk said she is his best fan) and daughters Laraine 19 and Sharyn 17.

We have been corresponding with Kirk for about 4 years after buying his book. This looks like a job for Superman. As Stan Lusk would have found with his interview in Serial World No.23 Kirk is a great guy.

My introduction to your magazine was by another friend Git Luboviski of Larry Edmunds Book Store. She sent me 5 copies knowing how much I like Serial fare.

Another station is now showing chapters each Friday night at 10:30. We are now into Chapter 7 of Flash Gordon. Previously shown have been Blackhawk, The Spiders Web and Batman and Robin. Even the girls enjoy them.

Of course having a V.C.R. makes seeing them better. I have the Spider and am up to date with Flash Gordon.

Yours sincerely,
Ern Darcy

P.S. Really enjoyed Cliffhangers and what a beautiful looking star Susan Anton is. Have you seen Raiders of the Lost Ark? Great stuff, all the old serials rolled into one.

The Ern Darcy family of Victoria, Australia

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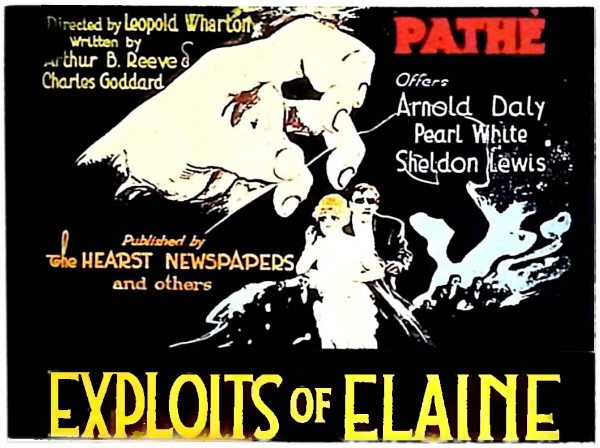

MAGAZINE BACK ISSUES

☐ **THING #1** is the first issue of the magazine on creatures from the cinema and includes: The Wolfman: a complete look at the film fur man, Creature Meseum, Godzilla - Japan's Classic Thing, Things That Drink Blood, and Things on Video Tape. Published in 1980 . . . . . $3.00

☐ **SERIAL WORLD #13** features The Shadow serial, Did You Know That, Spy Smasher, Serial Showcase, Serial Mailbag, and more. Published Winter 1978. . . . . $3.00

☐ **SERIAL WORLD #14** features Flash Gordon Conquers Minneapolis, Spy Smasher, King Of The Mounties, Did You Know That, Serial Mailbag, and more. Published Spring 1978 $3.00

☐ **SERIAL WORLD #15** features The Phantom, Buck Rogers, King Of The Mounties, Serial Mailbag, Serial Marquee. Published in Summer 1978. . . . . $3.00

☐ **SERIAL WORLD #16** features "The Cliffhangers" N.B.C. T.V. Show, Brenda Starr-Girl Reporter, Interview with Video Ranger Larry Stewart, and more. Published Fall 1978 . . . . . $3.00

☐ **SERIAL WORLD #17** features: Tribute to I. Stanford Jolley, Rockman Saga, Interview With Larry Stewart part 2, Undersea Kingdom, Serial Showcase, Serial Mailbag, Video Serials. Published in Winter 1979 . . . . . $3.00

☐ **SERIAL WORLD #18** features Video Serials, Serial Showcase, Secret Of Treasure Island Part 1, Did You Know That, Zorro's Black Whip, Western Film Club, Serial Quiz, Undersea Kingdom, Filmbook, and more. Published Spring 1979 . . . . . $3.00

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☐ **SERIAL WORLD #20** features Dick Tracy serial, Interview with Walter Reed part 2, Vintage Cliffhangers, Last Chapter for Serial Stars, Serial Showcase, Actual Serial Reviews, Serial Pin-Up, Roar Of The Iron Horse, Lone Ranger or Clayton Moore. Published in the Fall of 1979 . . . . . $3.00

☐ **SERIAL WORLD #21** features Susan Anton from The Cliffhangers TV shows, Full Color glossy reproductions of two famous Republic serial posters, Tom Steele interview, Chandu, Roar Of The Iron Horse conclusion, and more. Published in the Winter of 1980 . . . . . $3.00

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